

# Wellness Tips

## Providing Support to Family Members of War Victims

Every day, we hear new stories unfold relating to the war in Iraq. Many of the stories we are now hearing are about families who have lost loved ones in this war. As families come to the realization that their loved ones will not return home, they are faced with a great deal of grief and sadness.

Grief can bring on several stages of emotions, including feelings of shock, denial, guilt, anger, and/or depression. Often, these typical stages of grief happen in progression. However, some people may skip over a stage; some may be in a stage only briefly; and others may remain in one stage for a long period of time. By understanding that a friend who is grieving may be experiencing a range of emotions, you may be better able to empathize with what he/she is going through.

The suggestions offered below can help you support a friend who has experienced a loss during this time of war. Depending on the closeness of your relationship, you may adapt these suggestions to a level that is comfortable for you.

- **Become familiar with the process of grief.** There are many books in libraries and bookstores that are written about grief and loss. Find one and read it to understand better what your friend may be experiencing.
- **Use the correct language.** Be cautious with your word choice when speaking to the griever. Although well-intended, expressions such as “I understand” and “I can imagine what it’s like” may not help, as loss and grief are different for each person. A simple “I’m sorry to hear of your loss” or “I’m thinking of you” are good ways to communicate your condolences.
- **Be sensitive when discussing the war.** Remember that not everyone will share your views, and statements related to the politics of war, even if well intended, might create more stress for the person who has experienced a loss.
- **Be a good listener.** Listening can be the best way to comfort a grieving person. If you feel you can be a good support to your friend, let him or her know you’re available. If your friend comes to you to talk, allow plenty of time and privacy so there is no sense of urgency during your visit. Let go of any expectations about what is supposed to be said, and just listen.
- **Attend any memorial and funeral services.** Services may be weeks after the announcement.
- **Remember that everyone grieves differently.** The grieving process is very personal and some will need more time and space to heal than others.

### Resources Are Available

Call us for more information, help and support. Counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you. Additional information, self-help tools and other resources are available online at [www.MagellanAssist.com](http://www.MagellanAssist.com)